

Record

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WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Coping with holiday grief

4

Memorial planned

6

Letters to the editor

7

Conventions convene

12



Are You Ready?

Evangelism Conference slated for January

JACKSON, Miss. — The 2000 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference is designed "to involve the total church for inspiration and challenge in reaching their community for Christ," according to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) director of evangelism.

S.A. "Sonny" Adkins said the Jan. 21-22 conference "is a time in which God speaks to us to examine our own lives, the life of our church, and what we can do to make a difference in the community where we're located."

The conference takes place in two locations. Beginning at 1:30 p.m. on Jan. 21, and running until noon on Jan. 22, sessions will take place at Ridgcrest Church, Madison.

The second location will be at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson, beginning at 2 p.m. on Jan. 22, for a presentation of the Christian musical, "God for Us."

Speakers for the first sessions at Ridgcrest Church, Madison, include:

♦ Jerry Pipes, director of ministry evangelism for the North American Mission Board (NAMB);

♦ Phil Roberts, vice president for the strategic cities strategies group, NAMB;

♦ Junior Hill, evangelist from Hartselle, Ala.;

♦ Ken Weathersby, director of the Cecil B. Day Center for Church Planting at New Orleans Seminary;

♦ P.J. Scott, pastor of First Church, Olive Branch;

♦ Ken Smith of Ken Smith Ministries, West Columbia, S.C.

Musicians

for the first sessions include ♦ Steve and Becky Carver,

music evangelists from Mathiston;

♦ Greg O'Neal, minister of music, Ridgcrest Church, Madison;

♦ Bill Britton, minister of music, First Church, Olive Branch.

As part of the 1998 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference, the Mississippi Coliseum was the site for the musical "God With Us," featuring thousands of Mississippi Baptists in the choir and orchestra.

This year, "God for Us" will feature 3,000-4,000 singers from over 100 church

choirs, said Graham Smith, director of the MBCB Church Music Department.

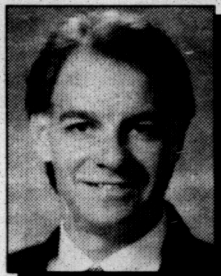
People should come to the musical performance "to be able to respond to God's love for us along with others all across Mississippi and adjoining states as we praise the Lord," he added.

Smith estimated nearly 200 instruments will be in the Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra, which will perform during "God For Us."

"This will be a great outreach," said Smith, "because some people might be willing to come to the coliseum who might not come to a church."

The Coliseum portion of the program will accommodate deaf interpretation.

For more information, contact the MBCB Evangelism Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



Pipes



Roberts



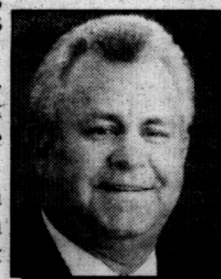
Hill



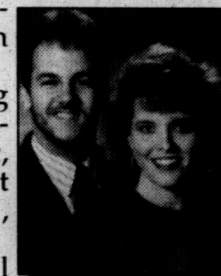
Weathersby



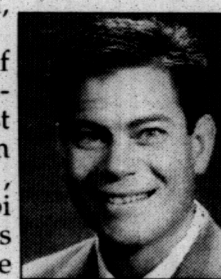
Scott



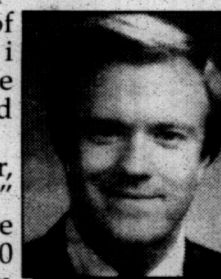
Smith



The Carvers



O'Neal



Britton

Youth Evangelism Conf. to build on 'Y2K' theme

JACKSON, Miss. — "Are You Ready for Y2K?" is the theme of the Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference on Dec. 31, in A.E. Wood Coliseum on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton.

For the conference, "Y2K" stands not only for the millennium but also for "Year to Kare," according to Don Lum, youth



Crenshaw



Lanier

evangelism consultant in the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), which sponsors the event.

Lum said he expects a full house of 3,200 for the conference, which begins with registration at 11 a.m. on Dec. 31, and concludes at midnight.

"Our goal is to help teenagers realize Christ can make a difference in their

lives," said Lum.

The conference also provides a safe place for teens to ring in the new year, he said.

Other aims of the annual conference include helping teens to understand that God can use them right where they live, and that to be used of God they need to be walking with Christ



Williams

and empowered by his Holy Spirit, Lum said.

Conference speakers include Danny Lanier, evangelist from Little Rock (Miss.); Scott Crenshaw, youth evangelist from San Marcos, Tex.; and Jim Futral, MBCB executive director-treasurer.

Danny Lanier is a long time evangelist with a heart for teenagers and has been an example that teens can follow, Lum said.

Scott Crenshaw, though not well-known in Mississippi, has a passionate desire for teenagers to realize they are ministers, Lum pointed out.

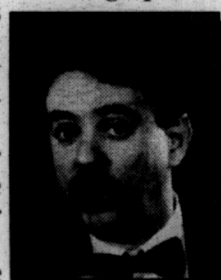


Futral

Futral, who will be the closing speaker for the conference, is known and respected throughout the state by Mississippi Baptist leaders, Lum observed.

"We wanted our teenagers to have the opportunity to hear him," he said.

Music leader will be Kevin Williams of Clinton, a popular music



Fore

leader for Youth Weeks at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

Other personalities on the program include Matt Fore, a Christian comedian from Hendersonville, N.C.; and Dennis Lee, a ventriloquist from Dallas.

Lee, with his "Nana Puddin' Bunch," is a Mississippi youth favorite and back by popular demand, Lum said.

Cost is \$5 per person. For more information, contact Lum at the MBCB Evangelism Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

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Perkins Jr.**
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39205-0530 (601) 968-3800
wperkinsjr@compuserve.com

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Redefining logic, American-style

Modern American culture has a way of turning logic on its head. Maybe it's human nature but, however improbable the contention, we'll stoop to any absurdity in our never-ending quest to get what we want, or to think what we choose, or to arrive at an outcome we find pleasing.

There is likely no area of our culture in which that statement falls with greater force than in our passion for sports — with the possible exception of politics. It is therefore at the intersection of sports and politics that the most ostentatious and vulgar displays of utter nonsense often take place.

For example, there is the case of Wilt Chamberlain, arguably the greatest player in the history of the National Basketball Association (NBA).

Chamberlain, who was born in Philadelphia in 1936 and died last fall in Bel Air, California, was a giant of a man who earned the nickname "Wilt the Stilt" by setting NBA records that will probably never be broken.

He scored a record 100 points in one game, never fouled out in 1,205 regular season and playoff games, and was named Most Valuable Player four times (three of those in consecutive years).

As famous as was Chamberlain for his athletic prowess, he's also remembered for his off-the-court antics with the opposite sex. He fancied himself a ladies' man, claiming publicly that he had slept with more than 10,000 women.

Faced with a withering attack at the time from women's and religious groups concerned about such braggadocio, he simply smiled and stood firm on his conquest count. Like many men (and women) before (and after) him, Chamberlain had become so enamored of himself — and so removed from any sense of morality and honest values — that he saw no wrong in his sordid actions.

Being equally sinful in the eyes of a just

God, we must not sit in judgment of Chamberlain — our Savior was clear on that subject (Matt. 7:1) — but must we honor him as an American hero?

Enter the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, the equivalent of our state Legislature. In a resolution (HR 300) introduced on October 27, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives proclaimed Chamberlain "... an indelible American icon," and called on the residents of that state to honor his "lifetime achievements."

Not to be outdone, the Pennsylvania Senate adopted its own Chamberlain resolution (SR 116) on November 16, honoring him for his "distinguished professional basketball career."

Maybe all of this wouldn't be so ironic, if the same two legislative bodies hadn't earlier in the same session passed resolutions proclaiming "Chastity Awareness Week," in Pennsylvania (HR 155 and SR 70).

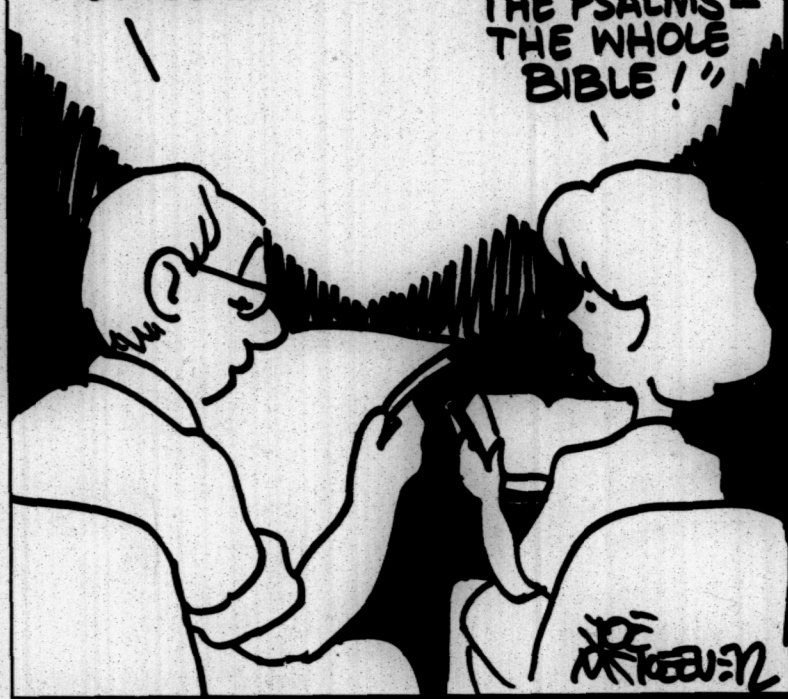
"Chastity promotes sexual self-control, self-esteem, and self-respect... and places sexual intercourse within the context of marriage," the House resolution stressed.

"Abstaining from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and related emotional trauma..." the Senate resolution pointed out.

To compound this tragicomic hypocrisy, the Chamberlain and chastity resolutions had five mutual sponsors in the House and four mutual sponsors in the Senate — and

"THIS WRESTLING
GOVERNOR SAYS
CHRISTIANITY IS
FOR THE WEAK
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NUMBERS."

"WELL, I
SURE DO—
IN NUMBERS,
IN GENESIS,
THE PSALMS—
THE WHOLE
BIBLE!"



believe it or not, the Senate is also currently considering a bill (SB 877) to empower the state Department of Health to promote chastity education "as part of a comprehensive abstinence program."

Some would argue that we can honor the abilities of a man like Wilt Chamberlain separate from his personal peccadilloes, and that there is no contradiction in promoting in the same breath those concepts for which he stood in such proud opposition.

What say you? In modern America, we can apparently have it both ways.

GUEST OPINION

When is our assignment as God's people complete?

By *Erich Bridges*, senior writer
International Mission Board

Christ's name. But are we finishing the task?

Not when more than 2,000 entire "nations" (ethnolinguistic groups) containing 1.7 billion people have had virtually no chance to hear the gospel in any form. Not when another 4,000-plus groups totaling 1.3 billion people lack a self-sustaining church movement, and an additional 1.5 billion people may have "heard" the gospel — but not clearly enough to understand it.

Not when less than 3 percent of Southern Baptist church

offerings reach beyond our own borders.

Not when reaching all peoples remains the lowest priority in the majority of Southern Baptist churches.

Not when fewer than 5,000 of 15.7 million Southern Baptists currently take the task seriously enough to give their lives to long-term international missionary service.

But imagine a day when tens of thousands of Southern Baptist churches become committed to God's mission, not

their own programs.

Imagine every church member becoming fully mobilized to reach the nations.

Imagine all kinds of creative church-missionary partnerships, specifically tailored for individual congregations and designed to reach whole peoples overseas.

Imagine 15,000 career missionaries (still fewer than one for every 1,000 Southern Baptists) targeting every unreached people group without ignoring responsive areas.

Imagine 50,000 volunteers each year (little more than one per church).

Imagine 1,000 Southern Baptist college graduates heading abroad every year for two years of mission service.

Imagine even high school graduates serving for a year before they make decisions that will shape the rest of their lives.

It is happening in churches infected with God's vision. It will happen before Jesus returns in glory, but only we can decide whether it will happen among us.

Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come" (Matt. 24:14). His Word will come to pass — when the task is finished!

The **Unfinished Task** 1999

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal: \$125 million

Longest-serving missionary surveys her life

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — When Louise Adamson arrived at her new missionary assignment in East St. Louis, she was quickly struck by the contrasts. From her room in the newly constructed Baptist Goodwill Center, she could see two taverns across the street — and the upstairs rooms where prostitutes lived.

"I looked around and I thought, 'Oh, Lord, this beautiful building looks like a rose in the midst of a rubbish heap. ... How do we begin?'" Adamson recounted. "And Jesus said to my heart clearly, 'My child, it's not you. You are not the good news. I am. I will be with you. The burden is not yours, it's mine. And if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto myself.'"

That was in November 1950, the beginning of the ministry career of the North American Mission Board's longest-term missionary. For 49 years Adamson has ministered to thousands mired in the poverty of the inner city, first in East St. Louis and since 1957 in central Atlanta.

Adamson — whose story has been featured nationally in Christianity Today magazine — gave an overview of how God has worked through her ministry during a chapel service at the North American Mission Board Nov. 16. She also was honored with the agency's Clovis Brantley Award for Outstanding Missionary Service, given to two church and community missionaries each year. This year's other recipient has not yet been announced.

While attending evening college classes in Atlanta during the 1940's and working as an office manager at a pharmaceutical laboratory by day, Adamson had her first exposure to the poverty of the inner city and its residents' desperate need for the gospel. She left her well-paying job to



FAITHFUL SERVANT — For 49 years, Louise Adamson has ministered to thousands in the inner-city as a home missionary. She began in East St. Louis in 1951, and since 1957 she has impacted thousands with the good news of Jesus Christ in Atlanta. (BP photo by Paul Obregon)

attend Southern Seminary in Kentucky, where she received her master's degree in social work.

She originally believed God wanted her overseas, but God had other plans. In East St. Louis, she quickly heeded a seminary professor's advice to "begin with the children." She started a kindergarten at the center that was soon reaching 100 children for three and a half hours each morning — loving, teaching, and instilling the gospel in their hearts and lives.

"Those hungry-hearted children would memorize whole chapters of the Bible, and they would go home and they would share the good news," she said.

The work also became a fulfillment of a call she had experienced during seminary to foreign missions. In the tough area of packing houses and animal stockyards where she ministered in East St. Louis, there were 13 different nationalities. "God

said, 'I've called you to foreign missions ... and put you here at their doorsteps,'" she said.

Within a few years, she married Fred Propst, superintendent of missions for the East St. Louis Baptist Association. Their ministry eventually took them to the inner-city slums of Atlanta, which at the time led the nation statistically in crime.

Through Capitol Avenue Church, where her husband was pastor, she began a comprehensive program of ministries to children and families in the inner city.

"When we moved in, our tires were slashed ... [W]e were threatened, we were shot at, because the [criminals] who were prospering didn't need any missionaries in that community to help bring these people to a new way of life," she said.

But home by home, family by family, they began to reach people with the gospel through broad-based ministry. The church also began to deal with the inevitable changes that come when a prosperous and influential church begins to seriously minister to the poor in its community. Capitol

Avenue, she said, made the transition well.

"The first Sunday that the doors of the church were open and the dirty little children came in, there was a little girl that came in at 11 o'clock. Her hair was straggling. Her clothes were wrong-side out, because the night before there had been fighting and cursing and abuse in her family," Adamson said.

"And when she came in, one of the precious old women of that beautiful, old, sedate church reached out her arms and said, 'Honey come sit with me.'"

One Wednesday night, she said, a milestone was reached as a former prostitute was approved by the congregation for membership. Later, Capitol Avenue continued its willingness to reach out by becoming one of the first churches to openly accept all races into its family.

"Women, men, and young people of wealth came to work in the inner city, and glorious, glorious, glorious has been the result,"



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

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CJ2K campaign successful

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — A national "Celebrate Jesus 2000" (CJ2K) advertising campaign Oct. 4-31 resulted in an unprecedented 43,300 calls to national toll-free response numbers as of Nov. 1. About 18,000 had requested a free copy of the "Jesus" video and 203 made immediate professions of faith.

"This campaign allowed Southern Baptists to impact thousands of lives with the gospel," said John Yarbrough, vice president for evangelization for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), which sponsored the effort. "Local churches now have the opportunity to follow up many of those who responded. What a tremendous partnership of technology linked with the personal care and touch of a local church."

The campaign included two television commercials on four national cable networks and the full set of six Celebrate Jesus 2000 radio commercials produced by NAMB.

At a cost of approximately \$500,000, this was the first national campaign ever sponsored by the agency to include a response mechanism for viewers — NAMB's Evangelism Response Center. Through the system, calls are routed to volunteer "telephone encouragers" who log on in their own homes.

Toby Frost, manager of event evangelism for NAMB and chairman of the NAMB's Celebrate Jesus 2000 task force, said telephone encouragers were excited about the opportunities confronting them as individuals literally called into their homes wanting to know more about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Looking back

10 years ago

The widow of Mississippi Baptist layman Owen Cooper, and Gene Triggs, chairman of the agricultural mission foundation, jointly announce the establishment of the Owen Cooper Foundation to provide endowment for the support of agricultural missions around the world.

20 years ago

W. C. Gann, director of missions for Alcorn-Tishomingo Association, announces his retirement effective Dec. 31. Gann has served Tishomingo Association since 1963 and Alcorn Association since 1971. Guy Culver of Union Association has been called to succeed Gann.

50 years ago

James L. "Jimmy" Sullivan, Mississippian and former pastor for First Church, Clinton, is unanimously elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Sullivan is a graduate of Tylertown High School and Mississippi College. He is pastor of Belmont Heights Church, Nashville.

Holidays can be hard after loss of loved one

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

When death has visited a family, the normally bright and joyous time of the Christmas season can become a dark and sorrowful time.

Ron Mumbower, minister of counseling at First Church, Jackson, says that while the sadness of grief cannot be avoided, there are things people can do to help negotiate the first Christmas after their loss.

Mumbower, author of the popular LifeAnswers weekly counseling column in The Baptist Record, speaks not only from the perspective of a professional Christian counselor, but also as a member of the fraternity of the bereaved.

He lost his father in an automobile accident just before Christmas seven years ago, and his mother passed away earlier this year from a reaction to treatment for a terminal illness — making this the first holiday season without either of his parents being alive.

"There is this strange sense of 'I don't have a home anymore.' Of course, I have my home in Clinton, but I no longer have a home I can visit over the holidays where my parents are," he said from his office at First Church in downtown Jackson.

After a death, a family has to go through the year of "the firsts," Mumbower said.

There is the first birthday, the first anniversary, the first Thanksgiving, and the first Christmas. Then, there is the first anniversary of the loved one's death.

"Often there is a sense of, 'Well, I made it one year; maybe now I can make it through another year,'" he said.

To help make it through the holidays, Mumbower has four suggestions for the individual or family facing their first Christmas without a loved one:

- "Sit down with family and plan a holiday season with awareness that it will be without your loved one. Ask members of the family what they want to do," he said.

Christmas is a time of traditions, and the death of a loved one may present the opportunity to establish a new tradition.

"After my father died, my mother did not want to have Christmas at home, which we had always done, so we had Christmas at our house (in Clinton)," he said.

For some people the keeping of tradition is, in and of itself, a comfort. Mumbower indicates there is nothing wrong with that.

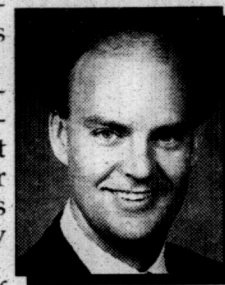
"Just remember," he said, "if you change tradition for this first Christmas, it doesn't mean you can't go back to the (old) tradition the next year."

- Mumbower encourages the bereaved to give themselves and others permission to be in grief.

Often a surviving spouse, parent, or child will find themselves going through the motions of the holidays without any sense of joy.

"I don't want to be misunderstood, but it is almost like an out-of-body experience. You don't know what is really going on," he said.

"Tears come at the weirdest moments, and that's okay. You may have to get up sometimes and go to another room for a few minutes. You can come back," he said.



Mumbower

The joyous expectations of the season make some feel they will ruin the occasion for others if they show tears.

Mumbower suggested the opposite is true. "Everyone in the family is experiencing the loss at one level or another. If you give yourself permission to grieve, you may help other family members express their own grief."

- Don't be afraid to talk about the loved one, Mumbower said.

"That first Christmas is a lot like the scene in A Christmas Carol, where Tiny Tim's crutch is over in the corner. There is this great big hole there and it needs to be talked about."

He stressed that this step is very important for children. "Let the children talk. If you want to, bring out the videos and the photo albums. Tell stories about past Christmases. Write the stories down and pass them on to the next generation. Grief is a good time for passing down heritage," he said.

- "You may think you are going crazy, but you aren't. You are grieving," he pointed out.

Mumbower said anger is often part of the grieving experience, especially during the holidays.

"I remember reading in my mother's journal how angry she was (after her husband's tragic death). She wrote things like, 'Why did you leave me, especially at this time of year?'"

Another frustration the bereaved face at the holidays is how to answer people who ask about how they're doing.

"You wonder, 'Do they really want to know, or do they just want to hear that I'm doing fine?'"

"Things are supposed to be joyful and uplifting, but you are not. You might want to avoid the sense of celebration that is associated with the holidays, but you can't — it's all around you."

Mumbower urged the bereaved not to avoid the season. Thoughtful, prayerful planning can help cope with that first Christmas after the death of a loved one.

Holiday deadlines posted

Due to postal regulations that limit The Baptist Record to 50 issues per year, there will be no issue published on December 30. All news items that have a requested publication date of December 23 or January 6 must be received in the newspaper's office by December 16. News items not received by the deadline will appear in the January 13 issue, or a later issue. For more information, contact The Baptist Record staff at (601) 292-3375 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

LIVING BEYOND MYSELF

If you have never heard that strange, whimsical song, "I'm My Own Grandpa," then you have missed a treat. If you haven't heard it and you would like to, I would suggest you contact Billy Causey at Raymond Church and either arrange for him to come and sing it, or maybe he will play and sing it over the telephone. Along with writing beautiful Christian music, Billy does a marvelous job of singing, "I'm My Own Grandpa."

The song is the story of a series of strange, twisted, convoluted, and yet possible relationships whereby a guy ends up being his own grandpa. Before you say it's impossible, sit down and listen to the song. I've thought about that song a number of times after a couple of unusual incidents that I have experienced in the last few months.

Incident One: I was speaking at a church in north Mississippi and before the service began a little lady came by to see me. After meeting her and talking just a moment, she began telling me how much she used to enjoy hearing my dad preach. I thanked her and asked her where she had heard my dad preach. She said she and her



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

husband used to go over to First Baptist Church, Amory, to hear him. Knowing that my dad had never preached at FBC, Amory, and knowing that I had been pastor there, I said to her, "Well, that was me you heard." "No," she replied, "it was your dad." Not wanting to mess up the compliment and certainly not wanting to embarrass her, I said, "It's been a long time since I was pastor there, but I think it was me that you heard at Amory." She looked at me with unbelieving eyes and dropped the subject and moved on to another subject. I stood there thinking to myself, "I've lived so long, I've become my own daddy!"

Incident Two: While speaking at another church recently, I was visiting with a couple who asked me, "Do you preach at Country Woods Baptist Church?" "No," I replied. The lady said, "Well my husband

and I had visited there and we thought you were the pastor there." "No, that's my son, Rob, who preaches there and that's probably who you heard." I saw uncertainty about how that would happen and we moved on to another subject. I stood there thinking to myself again, "I've lived so long, I've become my own son!"

As I reflected on both of these events, I thought about how we as Christians absolutely, truly do outlive ourselves. In Revelation 14:13, the Lord tells us that even when we die as believers our works do follow us. What a glorious thought, that even after we are gone, those things that we have set in motion for good and for the glory of God can continue.

We do, in fact, live beyond ourselves. In some ways that we understand and in a multiplicity of ways that we cannot

comprehend, our lives go on.

I think about the lives of those people who have so touched, blessed, and influenced me who probably never knew they had a significant part in shaping my life in the Lord. I think of people like Benny Lundy, who was willing to take on a group of eight and nine year old boys, and love us, teach us, and take us places. Though he has been with the Lord over 30 years, what he did in my life is alive today. I think of those special teachers in college who cared, encouraged, connected, and invested in me. Many of them have concluded the journey here on earth, but their works live on. I think of those saints in churches where I have served who probably knew ten times more about modeling their Christian faith than they did about debating it. Now, for many of them, their voices are silent but their works continue to speak loudly. Then, I think about my parents who lived with little and died with less, but left behind the construction materials with which a quality life can be built.

No, I am not my own daddy, nor am I my own son, but thanks be to God, I have the privilege, in Christ, to live beyond myself.

Miss. State star QB carries right attitude in game

STARKVILLE, Miss. (BP) — Matt Wyatt is a living lesson on comebacks and character. Mississippi State's 6-foot-5, 231-pound senior quarterback started the first three games of last season before being benched. He could have sulked. He could have complained. He could have felt sorry for himself.

"But he stood there on the sidelines, cheering on the guy who took his place, not showing an ounce of resentment," said Lloyd Humphrey, the Bulldogs' team chaplain and Wyatt's pastor at First Church in Starkville. "His attitude was just to be ready when they needed him."

The Bulldogs needed him Oct. 9 against Auburn. Wyatt came off the bench to lead the team to a score in the final minutes and an 18-16 victory.

They needed Wyatt again Thursday night, Nov. 4, against Kentucky on national television. This time, it looked as if he would fail. In three series before the final one, Wyatt's offense had lost ground. But with time running out, Wyatt led his team into field goal position and the Bulldogs preserved their perfect record with a 23-22 victory over Kentucky.

Wyatt's performance embodies the Mississippi State program, which will always have to overachieve to succeed. In a state with fewer people than metropolitan Atlanta, Mississippi State, Mississippi and Southern Mississippi are fighting for recruits, yet each is succeeding. All three

are ranked in the Top 25. Wyatt's five years at Mississippi State coincide with the resurgence of the program. It is an athletic and spiritual resurgence. The word "character" often flows from the mouth of coach Jackie Sherrill.

"Five years ago, we didn't have much character on our football team," Humphrey said. "But over the last four years we've been able to get a lot of kids who have character, and we've got a lot of kids involved in Bible studies who have then developed character."

Humphrey and Wyatt say that translates to success.

"I think it has everything to do with success on the field," Wyatt said. Neither Wyatt nor Humphrey are arguing that God favors the Bulldogs over another team because they have a lot of Christians, but they contend that the players perform better because their priorities are right.

"When you enter that relationship with him [Jesus Christ], he teaches you things that are going to make you successful wherever you go," Wyatt said. "Like how to be spiritually and mentally tough, how to get the big picture and see further down road. Over the past several years, we've just had a spiritual revival. There are so many guys on the team that are just starting to realize that living the life God wants us to live should come before football."

Part of that spiritual revival was sparked by tragedy. At the beginning of

two-a-day team practices two years ago, star running back Keefer McGee drowned. The shaken team was forced to consider life in terms of eternity.

"A lot of things were already going on spiritually, but that became the catalyst," Humphrey said. "That's the thing that helped us turn the corner. It made everybody stop and think."

It was a perspective-building experience, a sobering reminder of priorities. Priorities truly aren't hard to keep, Wyatt said, if you focus on Christ.

"One thing that's really cool about concentrating on having a personal relationship with God and putting him first is that everything else falls into proper perspective," Wyatt said. "Football, school, it takes its proper place. When I have tough times and I'm not doing well, what helps me is that I've never doubted whether God has control of my life and whether I'm letting him lead, because I've made that decision. It's settled. So when bad things happen, I just remember that God is in control."

He stays ready, ready for a comeback.

Said Wyatt, "I just really feel the last two or three weeks I've had has been a reward from God for hanging in there and keeping a good attitude."

Reprinted by permission from Crosswalk.com, an Internet Christian website featuring news, sports and numerous other resources at www.crosswalk.com.

James R. Moseley dies at 73

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — James R. Moseley, Southeastern Seminary's physician for the past three decades, died at his home in the early morning hours of Nov. 25 from heart failure. He was 73.

Moseley, a former missionary to Nigeria, Africa, had served as Southeastern's physician since 1969. Funeral services were held Nov. 28 at Wake Forest Church, Wake Forest, N.C., where he had been a member for many years.

Legacy building after golfer's tragic death

COLUMBIA, Md. (BP) — The legacy of golfer Payne Stewart will continue to affect players and fans for many years, predicts a chaplain on the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) tour.

Larry Moody, who has been counseling pro golfers since 1981, said in an interview Nov. 30 he plans to meet the week of Dec. 6 with two PGA members who have expressed a desire to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Those decisions followed Stewart's death in a chartered jet crash Oct. 25 — and the resulting, international attention focused on his memorial service at First Church in Orlando, Fla.

Many others are open to spiritual discussions and are taking a closer look at their own relationship with Christ, said Moody, president of Search Ministries. (Although Search Ministries has an outreach to the PGA tour, the organization emphasizes discipling business and professional people.)

Moody said the death of NASCAR driver Davey Allison in a helicopter crash several years ago stirred a revival among racecar drivers. He said he expects similar effects on the PGA tour in the coming year.

"As far as conversations of an in-depth nature, where

people are willing to be open and vulnerable about their own personal walk with God, I would say there is nothing that has even touched this," Moody said. "I would think that is true wherever you

means to have a personal relationship with the Savior during a plane ride a number of pro golfers took from Houston to Orlando in a break amid the Tour Championship to attend Stewart's memorial service at First Church, where Stewart, his wife, and two children had been attending.

Part of Moody's counseling during the aftermath of that service has been making sure people understand the centrality of a relationship with Jesus.

For example, some players who don't believe in Christ have been wearing W.W.J.D. (What Would Jesus Do?) bracelets like the

one Stewart publicly donned last April. Moody said these players assume they can try to live like Jesus even though they don't know him.

The chaplain addressed that issue during a mid-November memorial service for Stewart for students and faculty of Southern Methodist University. The school gave Stewart an outstanding alumni award last year.

"Remember, there is nothing magical about this piece of cloth," Moody told a crowd of 1,000 at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas. "Payne asked the question, 'What would Jesus do?' because he had accepted

what Jesus had done.

"Wear the bracelet if you want, but don't forget to embrace the Savior. Having experienced the love of God by accepting Jesus as your Savior, wear the bracelet as a reminder to live life so that others may experience God's love as well!"

After joining the tour in 1981, Stewart had been through many struggles. Among them was questioning why God allowed his father to die and the lack of peace he felt despite achieving his goals and winning major championships, Moody said.

A network of Christians led the golfer to Christ, he said. Among them were his agent, Robert Fraley, who also was among the six people killed in the crash, and fellow pro Paul Azinger, who survived a bout with cancer several years ago.

"He would go spend time with Paul and he saw a peace in Paul that he didn't have," Moody said. "That made him continue to investigate. Azinger [shared] a quote I had given him early in his treatment — 'We're not in the land of the living going to the land of the dying, we're in the land of the dying going to the land of the living.'"

Major league baseball pitcher Orel Hershisier also played a key role, teaching a Sunday School class at First Church, Orlando, in the off-season. During those classes last winter, Payne came to grips with his need for a relationship with Christ, Moody said.



Stewart

have an arena where death is not a natural part of it."

The recent tragedy sparked a realization among these famous men that they aren't "bulletproof" or guaranteed 80 years of life, Moody said. Since God could call them home at any time, the golf chaplain said, the question they must face is whether they are ready.

"I can't tell you how many players came up and said, 'The peace that Payne had was his relationship with Jesus Christ; is that correct?'" Moody recounted. "I said, 'Yes.'"

That led to several opportunities to share what it

Wayne Oates, pastoral care pioneer, dies

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) — Wayne Oates, a pioneer in the field of pastoral care and counseling, died Oct. 21 in Louisville, Ky.

Oates, 82, taught 1948-74 at Southern Seminary and then at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He wrote nearly 60 books in a 50-year career as an author and professor.

He was one of the first scholars to advocate using principles of psychiatry and psychology in ministry, opening the door for what became an established field known as pastoral care. He remained one of the foremost experts in the field until his death.

"He always kept pastoral care grounded in theology and the Bible," said Andy Lester, a former student who teaches pastoral theology and pastoral counseling at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University.

"There are many who would thank Oates for holding the field's feet to the fire of biblical and theological roots and relevance."

Gambling: a violation of Biblical principles

Third in a four part series.

GAMBLING VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF STEWARDSHIP

Property and goods are provided in trust by a gracious God. Wealth and economic goods are not in themselves evil but may be the occasion of sin if the owner acquires them in covetousness and uses them without reference to God's intention. Ultimately all things belong to God (Psalms 24:1; 50:10-12; 1 Cor. 10:26). This must undergird our attitude toward and our use of the possessions for which we are responsible. The recognition that God owns all the things in this world is the beginning of a right relationship to things. Out of this awareness there arises a fitting response: we give ourselves to him (2 Cor. 8:5). Thus the discharge of stewardship begins in the surrender of self to the sovereign will of God. From that inward dedication we move to the sober and grateful handling of our stewardship in economic matters (Luke 12:42-48; Matt. 25:14-46).

The Bible indicates certain uses of money or property which are in accord with the intention of God. Money may be used to provide for our basic needs (2 Thess. 3:10), support one's family (1 Tim. 5:8), contribute to the Lord's work (1 Cor. 16:1-3), meet human needs (Eph. 4:28; 2 Cor. 9:6-15), give to the poor (John 13:29), and pay taxes (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:7).

Such conscientious handling of one's resources precludes gambling. There is ground for wise investment of one's wealth with a hope for a sensible return (Matt. 25:14-30), but this can hardly be used to sanction gambling risks. The injunction to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" invites the most careful attitude toward expenditures of any kind (Matt. 6:19-21).

Particularly reprehensible are those attempts to gain property

through dishonest or exploitative practices. In the Bible, stealing is condemned (Ex. 20:15; Matt. 19:18; Eph. 4:28). Equally condemned is the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of others (James 5:1-4). Honest work and honest wages go together, for "the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). The Lord of the harvest will deal sharply with those who deviate from this basic norm.

GAMBLING VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF WORK

The divine command rings clear that one should labor and do one's work (Ex. 20:9; Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10-12). Work has a functional value; it is rooted in necessity. It is also rooted in creation. Each person is obligated

under God to work. This work must be in keeping with God's intention. The curse pronounced upon the ground, following the Fall, is not a curse upon work itself but a recognition of the frustration and hardship that attend humanity's quest for bread in this fallen world (Gen. 3:17-19).

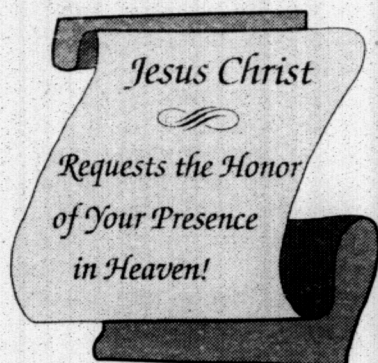
Work affords the means of sustaining one's life and supporting one's dependents. Work is related to the use of the earth's resources. The able person who refuses to work has no right to eat.

No one is to "sponge" off others. Idleness, so Paul reasoned, is a form of impiety because it repudiates work which is the divinely appointed way of caring for one's household (2 Thess. 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:8).

Work is related to creativity. It is sharing in God's activity in the world. Thus the type of employment whereby a living is gained must agree with the purpose of God and must form a part of the world's needed work. Some forms of work may be socially and morally degrading and, therefore, inconsistent with the divine intention of human good.

It is through work that humans also express their essential being. God is a worker, and we are to work (John 5:17).

Excerpted from the pamphlet, *Biblical Insights on Gambling* may be purchased from The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, of the Southern Baptist Convention, at a cost of .22 cents each. Call (615) 244-2495 to order.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

'Wall of Help and Hope' planned

Fred and Glynn Garrott of Brandon are working with several other organizations and individuals to establish a memorial wall for Mississippi families who have lost children, youth, or young adults up to age 30. Called The Wall of Help and Hope, the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation has agreed to provide the initial location for the memorial at the medical mall (formerly the Jackson Mall) on Woodrow Wilson Ave.

The Garrotts' interest in this project stems from the untimely death of their 23-year-old daughter Jennifer in October 1993. Jennifer Garrott was a registered nurse and had been on mission trips to Tennessee, Jamaica, and Honduras. While a student at the University Medical Center in Jackson, she attended Sunday School and worship at First Church, Jackson. She returned from a mission trip to India just a few months before

dying in an automobile accident. A photo of Jennifer in India taking blood pressure was in the Sept. 2, 1993 issue of The Baptist Record.

It is the Garrott's hope that the wall will serve as a place of healing and hope for families who have suffered the loss of a child. It will be a bright, colorful spot for families and friends of the deceased to visit on special occasions, they said.

The Wall of Hope will also provide financial support for Our Brother's Keeper, a bi-racial organization created by four men — two Methodists and two Baptists — to reduce hunger and poor nutrition in Mississippi.

The wall is scheduled to be dedicated on February 14 at the Jackson Medical Mall. Families, friends, and groups interested in helping to create the permanent memorial should contact Our Brother's Keeper at (601) 362-9095, or the Garrotts at (601) 992-1816.



Jennifer Garrott on 1993 mission trip to India

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The Office of Continuing Education at Mississippi College will offer Real Estate courses scheduled to begin in February of the 2000 Spring semester. Also, offered in the Spring semester will be the Senior Adult Education Program (age 55 or above). This program allows senior adults to register and attend selected academic courses. The School of Business announces the annual start of the innovative accelerated prerequisite program that allows students to complete prerequisites for the master of business administration degree. Call Ken Gilliam at (601) 925-3263 for more information.

Blue Mountain College will present its first annual "Blue Mountain College Christmas Extravaganza" on Dec. 9, in

Garrett Recital Hall. The Blue Mountain College Chorale, under the guidance of Dani Jones, will perform various adaptations of traditional Christmas music. "Paid in Full" will make a guest appearance during the concert. Call (662) 685-4771 ext. 131 for more information.

**Safety First.
And Second.
And Third...**



More than 8,000 Southern Baptist congregations now trust Church Mutual for property, liability, workers' compensation and commercial auto insurance advice and protection.

Where 8,122 Southern Baptist churches turn for protection.

At no cost or obligation to you, we'll conduct an on-site analysis of your buildings and activities, then recommend a plan designed specifically for your church. Compare our plan with your present insurance program. You'll find out why more churches trust Church Mutual than any other insurance company in the nation. Call today. 800-554-2642 www.churchmutual.com



FREE ON-SITE ANALYSIS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 9, 1999

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

1999 Family Celebration of Christmas

The Christmas season is such an important time in the life of the church and the individual Christian. In the last issue of **Housetops** we provided the first two of five Christmas devotionals. This issue includes the last three. We hope these will enrich families as they seek to keep Christ at the center of the Christmas season.

For your own complete set of these devotionals, you may phone Peggy Powell at 601-292-3299, or 1-800-748-1651.



FAITH

Second Sunday Before Christmas - December 12

Wreath. If using a wreath, light three purple candles.

Read. Have a family member read Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah, whose unhappy task it was to warn the Israelites of the disaster which would be brought about as a result of their own sins, was also permitted to be the announcer of the future New Covenant. The Old Covenant, which God had made with their ancestors, had been dependent upon their following the terms of the agreement. If they remained faithful to Him, all would go well with them. The problem is that we are all inclined to follow our own wills instead of being faithful to Him, and so we are in need of a Savior.

Read. Have a family member read Hebrews 9:11-15 and 10:16-17.

We are so blessed to be on this side of Christ's first coming! We, who have put our trust in Him, belong to the New Covenant, or Testament. Jesus came as a tiny baby at Christmas so that we would no longer be under the Law, the Old Testament way of doing things, but under Grace. Because we have the Holy Spirit within us, the Lord writes His laws on our hearts. Because of Jesus, He remembers our sins no more! The amazing thing about all this is that God not only did all of this for us, He patiently waits for each of us to receive Him.

Make. Work with your children to make two tablets out of clay. These represent the Law of the Old Testament. Then, work together to make a cross of clay. This represents the New Testament of Grace under Christ.

Sing *Silent Night, Holy Night* #91 (Baptist Hymnal). Let each family member choose a hymn for you all to sing together.

Pray, thanking God for His unbelievable gift of Himself. Because He loves us so much, He has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him. All we have to do is believe!



LOVE

Sunday Before Christmas - December 19

Wreath. If using a wreath, light the three previously lit purple candles. Light either the fourth purple candle or the pink one, depending on which your family chose to have.

Read. Have a family member read Numbers 21:5-9.

The Israelites were having a hard time in the desert. They missed the comforts of Egypt, the ready food and water, and they were sick of manna! Instead of being grateful to God for delivering them from Egypt and taking care of them, they complained.

Because of their rebellious hearts, God sent serpents among them. Everyone who was bitten by a serpent died. This was a symbol of judgement for their sins.

When Moses lifted the brass serpent, everyone who looked at it lived. The lifting up of the brass serpent is a picture of Christ's sacrificing Himself for our sins.

Read. Have a family member read John 3:14-15 and John 12:32.

The purpose for His coming was to take upon Himself the sins of everyone who would trust in Him. *Son of Man* was a title that Jesus used for Himself. It comes from Daniel 7:13, and refers to the Lord's Messiah or Anointed One. Jesus is clearly saying that He deliberately came into this world to sacrifice Himself so that those who believe in Him will never die.

How can we comprehend that the God of the universe humbled Himself to become a tiny baby for the purpose of sacrificing Himself for us? It is such a great act of love. We can never be thankful enough!

Make. Guide your children to create out of clay or draw a picture of a brass serpent on a pole and a picture of a cross. The serpent on the pole is a beautiful picture of God's loving provision and the cross reminds us of the forgiveness we receive when we trust in Jesus.

Sing *O Little Town of Bethlehem* #86 (Baptist Hymnal). Sing lots of other Christmas carols together.

Pray, thanking God for loving us enough to provide us with an escape from our own sinfulness: a baby named Jesus!



JOY

Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

Wreath. If using a wreath, light all four previously lit candles and also the white or *Christ candle* in the center.

Read. Have a family member read Isaiah 12:1-2.

God is our salvation! This passage speaks of a future time in which God will provide salvation for His people. We will trust in the Lord, and not be afraid. The Lord is not only our strength, but also our Song. He has not only provided for, but has become, our salvation!

Read. Have a family member read Luke 1:46-55.

This is Mary's beautiful *Magnificat*, which means song of praise. This is a joyous song of praise and thanksgiving pouring out of a pure heart. In her praise and thanks to God for His promise of a Savior, Mary repeats Isaiah's prophetic song of thanksgiving to God for providing a Savior for His people.

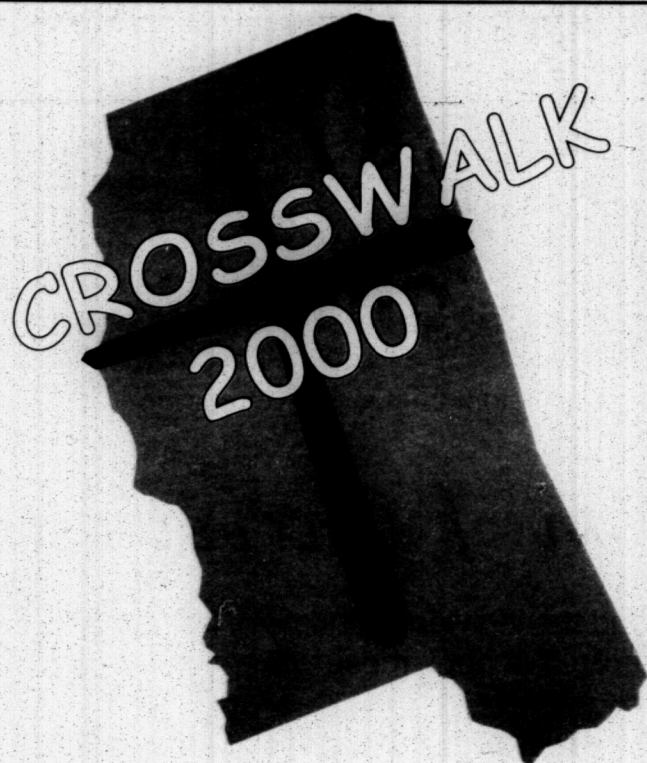
We, who have been given this precious Gift, also have the privilege of praising God and thanking Him for His Son, who has become our Salvation. What better way to celebrate His coming than to thank our God for sending Him, and to remember why He did!

Make. Help your children to draw a picture of the baby Jesus, or to make out of clay a model of Jesus in a manger.

Sing *Joy to the World* #87 (Baptist Hymnal). Singing is a wonderful way to praise God and to enjoy fellowship with each other! Sing a lot of carols together!

Pray, thanking God for His amazing loving-kindness to us by sending Jesus as a baby to become our Salvation! How can we be anything but joyful in the presence of this Song?

A STATE-
WIDE
MINISTRY
PROJECT
FOR
ACTEENS
AND
YOUTH ON
MISSIONS
GROUPS



Mississippi Acteens have an incredible opportunity to participate in a state-wide ministry project beginning in March 2000. **CROSSWALK** is a year long event designed to promote awareness of Acteens and challenge teenagers to missions involvement. It will provide opportunities for

Area Coordinators

YVONNE TAYLOR
344 Wildcat Bottom Road
Red Bank, MS 38661
(662) 851-7331 (home)
(662) 252-4371 (work)

AREA 2
DANA PICKENS
1033 CR 206
Blue Springs, MS 38828
(662) 534-8057

AREA 3
GLENDA BRASWELL
PO Box 573
Boyle, MS 38730
(601) 843-9611

AREA 4
ANN STONE
Route 1 Box 359
Mantee, MS 39751
(662) 456-4440

AREA 9
DONNA SAULS
10 Virginia Drive Lot 2
Poplarville, MS 39470
(601) 795-2148 (home)
(601) 982-5281 (work)

AREA 5
LIZ HARPER
2237 Woodland Place
Florence, MS 39073
(601) 845-3380

AREA 6
KATHY PEARCE
PO Box 689
Decatur, MS 39327
(601) 635-3880

AREA 7
LIZ MCGRAW
PO Box 1460
Woodville, MS 39369
(601) 888-3255

AREA 8
MELINDA MCGREGOR
202 Moss Lane
Petal, MS 39465
(601) 582-9725

Acteens and those they involve to lead in a community ministry that models what they think Jesus would do if He were to visit their community. **CROSSWALK** is based on Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

To sign up for **CROSSWALK**, please contact your **AREA COORDINATOR** (please do not call

the state office to register). She will send you additional information including a **CROSSWALK Event Report form**. Please complete that information and send it to her with pictures, etc. when your project is complete.

Crosswalk 2000 is sponsored by
Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union.

For more information please contact Robin Keels,
State Crosswalk Coordinator at (601) 292-3322 or (800) 748-1651.

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 21-22, 2000

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison
Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson

SCHEDULE

Friday - January 21, 1:30 p.m.

Welcome PrayerPhil Walker
.....Pastor, Ridgecrest Baptist Church
Worship Leaders.....Steve and Becky Carver
MessageJerry Pipes
Praise/WorshipSteve and Becky Carver
MessagePhil Roberts
Praise/WorshipSteve and Becky Carver
Message.....Junior Hill

Friday - 6:30 p.m.

Welcome/Prayer.....Ed J. Deuschle
.....Consultant, Evangelism Department
Worship LeaderGreg O'Neal
MessageKen Weathersby
Worship/PraiseGreg O'Neal
Message.....Ken Smith

Saturday - January 22, 9:00 a.m.

Welcome/PrayerDon Lum, Consultant
.....Evangelism Department
Worship LeaderBill Britton
MessageP.J. Scott
Praise/WorshipBill Britton
Message.....Ken Smith
Praise/WorshipBill Britton
Message.....Junior Hill
Call to The Cross

Saturday - 2:00 p.m.

"God For Us"Mississippi Coliseum
Graham Smith
Director, Music Department

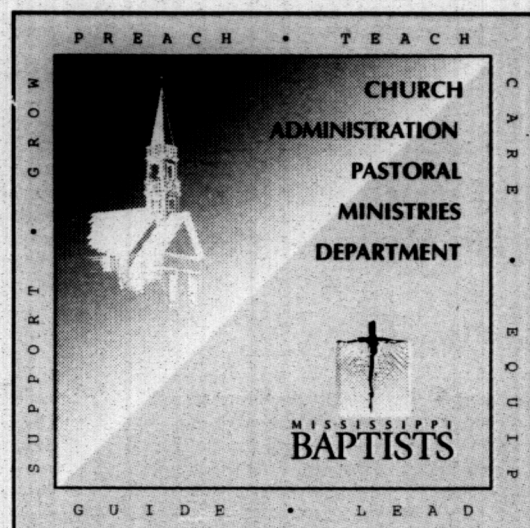
For more info, call 601-968-3800
or 1-800-748-1651

CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE

February 3, 2000
First Baptist Church, Madison

*We Can't Administer What We Don't Have
We Must Administer Rightly What We Do Have*

Theme: Administration and Leadership of Financial Resources



Purpose: To provide information and challenge to church leaders on the administration, leadership, and resources of church finances with a biblical basis being strongly emphasized.

Target Audience: Pastors, administrators, treasurers, financial committees, deacons, trustees

Registration Fee: \$10 (includes lunch at the church)

Sponsored by:

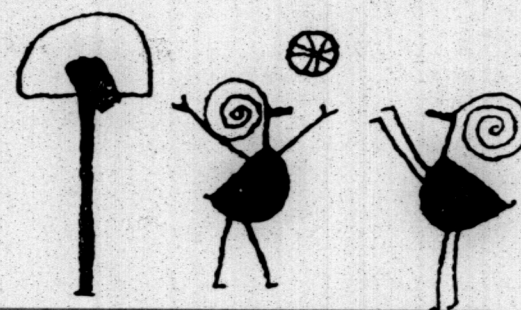
Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, MBCB

Metro Baptist Association, Jackson

Stewardship and Cooperative Program Department, MBCB

Call 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651 for more information.

GA/Acteens Campus Days



William Carey College
January 15
2-7 p.m.

- Missionaries • Basketball
- Music • Testimonies
- Cheerleaders

- 2:00 Registration and campus tours
- 3:00 Program
- 4:15 Snack, break, etc.
- 5:00 Game time



Deacon Ministry Emphasis

Deacon Ministry Emphasis... is a plan with specific actions that highlight deacon ministries and involves deacon training and service.

The Purpose Of Deacon Emphasis Is To:

- Focus on their biblical role
- Build team relationships
- Secure involvement in ministries
- Develop skills for ministry

Deacon Emphasis Week is scheduled for January 9-16, 2000, but a deacon ministry emphasis may be conducted at any time during the year.

To participate, the deacons would choose at least two actions and perform them during a specified time (preferably during **Deacon Emphasis Week**). See the possible activities listed in this brochure.

A certificate of recognition will be presented to each deacon body that participates.

For other projects and information, contact:

Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department
Keith Gordon, consultant
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530
(601)968-3800, extension 307, or 1-800-748-1651

William Carey GA/Acteens Campus Day Registration (Deadline January 10)

Church _____ Assoc. _____
Contact person _____
Daytime phone _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
No. people _____ x \$7.50 = \$ _____

Make check to MBCB and send to GA/Acteens Campus Days,
WMU Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

For more info call the State WMU Office
1-800-748-1651 (in state) or 601-292-3316

\$7.50 (includes basketball game, meal, program, and limited insurance)

Pray this day for...

December 10 - January 6, 2000

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

Prayer's Influence on Evangelism

"A church that strives to evangelize its community without saturating its efforts in prayer is like a race car driver that jumps into a car at the starting line and discovers that the tank has not been filled with gas."

--George Barna in *Evangelism That Works*

Missionary Barbara Rivers holds evangelistic teas in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and several women have prayed to receive Christ. Pray for their spiritual growth and development.

Pray for the Baptist personnel who are ministering to the refugees in Manado, Indonesia. Many had to flee from the North Maluku Islands because of the violence. Also pray for peace and reconciliation for the people of this area.

Pray for Baptist representatives as they do door to door witnessing every Saturday in Novochoerkassk, Russia. Ask God to bless the seeds of the gospel in the hearts of students that they will bear fruit.

Please pray for Baptist representatives to Ukraine, Jerry and Jo Meeks, whose oldest son, 25, was killed in an accident in October. They plan to return to Ukraine in January.

A young man began attending church in the village of Amoussime, Togo, in December 1998, but his father has forbidden him to continue. Pray for the salvation of this young man and his father.

Ask God to give home-based intercessors an extraordinary burden and zeal to pray for the 10 million lost people in Bangkok, Thailand. Pray that thousands of these lost Thais will hear and accept the life-changing truth.

Pray that a number of churches in Mississippi will agree to become prayer partners with the churches in Ukraine who have partnership volunteer teams going to help them plant churches.

Pray for divine wisdom for journeyman Edward Elder as he spends mid-November through mid-December working among the Sui people of Surin Province of Thailand. Pray that he can concentrate fully on his language learning and develop great skill.

Pray for the physical needs of each of the Samburu Baptist leaders in Kenya, which come from just living in a semi-arid land. Pray that they will grow strong spiritually during times of physical suffering.

Preparations are being made to translate a Christian movie entitled "God's Story" into the Susu language of Guinea. Pray that God will provide all the necessary people and equipment for the translation.

Please lift up the Baptist pastors of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Many are looking for work outside of their pastorate, in order to provide for their families financially. Pray that the Lord will provide jobs for them.

In October, missionaries Al and Judy Gary in Guadeloupe, French West Indies, began new work among professionals in Abymes. Twenty-one people were present at the first gathering. Give thanks for the opportunity to minister among this group.

Missionaries ministering among the Hausa of Nigeria ask you to pray that they will be able to look beyond the beliefs and religion of the people and truly hear their heart needs. Pray that that will then respond with the God-given words and actions needed to meet those needs.

Pray for plans that are underway to begin production of the "Jesus" film in several indigenous languages of Guatemala.

Please pray for a young businesswoman in Chengdu, China, who will be called "Rainbow." She made a profession of faith, but now says that she is not sure she wants to be a Christian right now. She wants to focus on making money and wait until she is 50 to serve Christ.

Four Baptist churches in Altamira, a city of about 65,000 people located along the Transamazon Highway in Equatorial Brazil, are seeking to reach out to the lost. Pray that the Mission in the Independent II neighborhood of Altamira will be strong enough to organize into a church by 2000.

Missionaries Paul and Janet Rohde are praising the Lord for the renewal of Grace Baptist Church. With the faithfulness of five members who began to pray and reach out to the community, three young men are willing to preach and teach. Pray that the church and its leaders will remain faithful.

Despite the atheistic influence in China, Christ is present. It has been estimated that as many as 60 to 100 million believers meet each week to worship. Pray that the 1.1 billion people who have not yet heard a clear presentation will have an opportunity to hear in the near future.

Thank God for His wonderful miracles that not only meet an immediate desperate need, but also proclaim His miraculous power to the lost.

For Youth Evangelism Conference, Mississippi College (Evangelism). Pray that the expected Y2K computer problem will not be as bad as predicted but an opportunity for Christians to witness.

We must enter the 21st century on our knees. Pray for efforts underway to produce a copy of the Scriptures that is especially designed to be "user-friendly" for followers of a world religion in a country where the authorities are antagonistic toward the Bible. Pray for the health and security of all involved.

It is estimated that men represent only 20 percent of the church population in Suriname. Pray that the Lord will open the hearts of unsaved men to the gospel.

In Macau, there are over 60 churches of various denominations. They will be joining together for a major evangelistic emphasis in the city before the December 20th handover of Macau to China. Pray that the Lord would bless these efforts and make them effective in bringing people to Christ.

A Djimini village chief in Cote D'Ivoire heard the gospel preached at a funeral service and placed his faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only known Christian in his village. Pray that his confession of faith will be respected by others in his village.

Pray for believers in Shen Yang, China, to develop a desire for the Bible, to promote their understanding of God, and to stand against the many heresies and cults constantly attacking the church.

Pray for the Lighthouses of Prayer across America. A Lighthouse is a gathering of one or more people in Jesus' Name for the purpose of praying for, caring for and sharing Jesus Christ with their neighbors and others in their sphere of influence.

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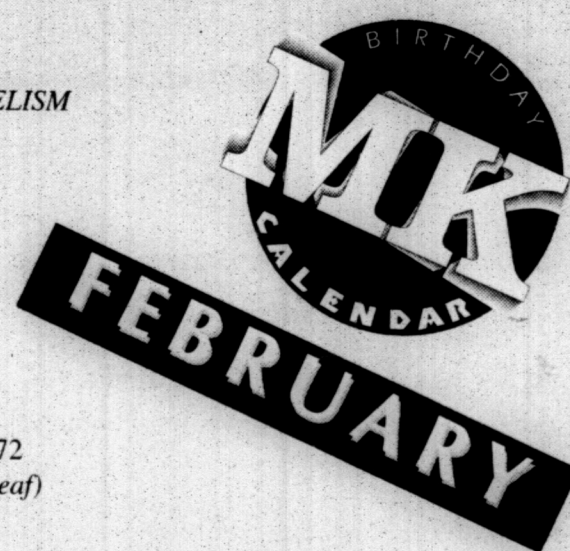
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HOUSE TOPS

BEWARE DECEPTION

Editor:

Nowadays most people are concerned about the return of Jesus and many false doctrines are abounding.

Papers are claiming that he will return December 31 and that on Christmas day the moon will turn to blood. No man knows the day or the hour of his return but God only. And some claim he is on earth now. How wrong they are!

The Holy Bible says if anyone tells you he is here or he is there or that he is in the secret

chambers to believe it not, for he will come in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. Beware of the antichrist who will show wonders that if it were possibly would deceive the very elect.

Arlo McReynolds
Baldwyn

EVOLUTION: BAD SCIENCE

Editor:

Evolution is bad science. Even Charles Darwin in "Origin of Species" expressed doubts.

Evolution has never been

observed nor had it been repeated. Creation, on the other hand, was observed by God (Gen. 1-2) and angels (Job 38:4-7) and will be repeated (Rev. 21:1). Evolution can not explain the origin of energy or matter. Creation does.

Geneticists have proved, contrary to evolutionary theory, each species has a different DNA. It is genetic development, such as found in agricultural breeding practices, which give us hardier insects and bacteria. In fact, bacteria have been proven to have intelligence, again contrary to evolution.

The fossil record is inade-

quate evidence for evolution or Creation. There are no fossils of any links between species. However, fossils have confirmed a worldwide deluge (Gen. 6-8). The geological column, layers of earth which mark the geological eras, has not been found to exist anywhere on earth except the papers and imagination of men (Gen. 8:21).

Evolution is bad theology for it attacks the integrity of the Bible. It denies what God declares - that he created in six days and that the sentence of death is due to man's sin. Any form of evolution requires death ages before man existed.

Rom. 1:18-22 warns of some dangers in rejecting God's Creation truth. As we see the increased ridicule of Biblical truths and the acceptance of anti-God theories, we see proportionately an increase in such sins as sexual immorality and violence, and the approval of the same.

For further reading I recommend Gen. 1-3, Job 38-41, John 1:15, and Rev. 22:18-19.

Alice Talley
Columbus



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Winter Bible Study cartoons available

Editor:

For the sixth year, I have prepared a set of cartoons to accompany the Winter Bible Study which is 1 and 2

Thessalonians this year. These are free for the asking, but we request a \$2 contribution to our church to cover printing, postage, and handling.

The cartoons are self-explanatory and work best when copied onto transparencies for use with an overhead projector.

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P. O. Box 1357, Kenner, LA 70063

Joe McKeever, pastor
First Church
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JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs of Carmel Church, Monticello

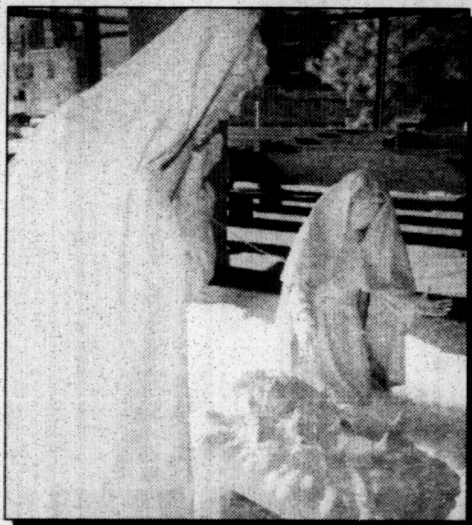
GAs of Carmel Church, Monticello, held a recognition service Nov. 18 to present the girls with the badges they had earned over the past two years. Pictured (first row) are Misty Johns, Gina Neal, Breanna Hear, Becky Satterley, and Alex Yeatman. Second row, Kim Merritt, Shaina Johnson, Alicia Johns, and Ashley Rushing. Third row, Whitney Cox, Randa Hearn, GA leader Selena Dunn, Ashley Delaughter, Bradi Boutwell, and Mandy Dunn.

GAs of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, helped celebrate Ledora Bailey's 100th birthday on Nov. 6. The girls, led by Kathy Mason, GA director, presented Bailey with cards and balloons. After the girls sang several older hymns, including her favorite, Amazing Grace, Bailey said, "I've had so much fun, I'm going to have another birthday next year!"



GAs of Temple Church, Hattiesburg

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Baptist Memorial Health Care's Pastoral Care Department recently unveiled two new nativity scenes on the campuses of Baptist Memorial Hospital-Medical Center and Baptist Memorial Hospital-East. The life-sized statues were provided through the Pastoral Care Endowment Fund, which donates money to ministries and services that exemplify Christ's ministry. The Pastoral Care Department employs 22 chaplains and has 272 volunteer chaplains. For more information on the Pastoral Care Department, visit www.baptistonline.org or call (901) 227-5475.



Nativity scene at Baptist Memorial Health Care

Bethesda Church, Terry, had ground breaking services for an educational building. Marty Wilson, pastor, is pictured with the new building committee, grounds committee, and finance committee.



Bethesda Church, Terry, ground breaking

Geraldine and Ricky will

be appearing at Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, on Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m. Kara Blanchard is pastor.



Pleasant Grove Church, Shannon, recently held a recognition service for its GAs. The girls that earned level 5 and level 6 charms (pictured) are Brittany Collins, Angel Parchman, Jesse Mason, Courtney Peters, Nikki Dew, and Brittany Burelson. The leader is Suzy Collins. Joe Holcomb is pastor.

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Children's Bible Drill participants of New Liberty Church, Scott Association

New Liberty Church, Scott Association, had 14 youth participate in Bible Drills this year. They competed in associational drills. Nine advanced to State Drills in Brandon. Pictured (front row) are Lindsey Turner, Deana Crane, Kaleb Smith, Rheannan Crane, Lexi Thompson, Brandi Bates, and Dusty Smith; (back row) Matthew Smith, Luke Thompson, Adam McCurdy, Mack Crapps, Brad Bates, and Jessica Turner. Not picture is Jason Bates. Paul Smith is pastor. Jimmy and Gloria Turner, leaders.

New Liberty Church, Scott Association, had 11 children to participate in Bible Drills this year. All 11 competed in associational drills. Ten advanced to state drills in Brandon. Pictured

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(kneeling, from left) are Brandon McCurdy, Amanda Renfro, Leann Crapps, Candice Smith, and Jay Anthony; (standing) Ben McCurdy, Morgan Wells, Beau Rhinewalt, and Kayla Crane. Not pictured were Caleb Brown and Cassie Neal. Paul Smith is pastor. Karen Smith and Vicki Bates, leaders.



Youth Bible Drill participants of New Liberty Church, Scott Association

Acteens of Liberty Church, Union Association, recently held its StudiAct recognition. Attendants (pictured, from left) are Clara Beth Watson, Marlee Sappington, Hannah Russell, Jacob Pilcher, MacKensey Stout, and Seth Taylor. Acteens receiving awards (from left) are Emily Fitzgerald, Queen with Scepter; Christy Murrah, Kellie Pickens, and Jenny Tate, Queen Regent and Queen Regent in Service; Amanda Barton, Queen with Scepter; and Samantha Huffstatler, Queen with Scepter and Queen Regent.



Acteens of Liberty Church, Union Association



Glory

The seven-member group, Glory, of Holly Bluff Church, Holly Bluff, has presented programs at several churches throughout Yazoo County and surrounding areas. Members of the group pictured (from left) are Rachel Langley, Kathryn Hudson, Georgia Goodman, and Anna Leigh Goodman; (back row) Jamie Hudson, Floyd Coghlan, and Crystal Coghlan. Glory is directed by Lydia Goodman and Liz Langley.

Ed Gandy Scholarship

The family of Ed Gandy, former pastor and director of missions for Alcorn Association, has established a scholarship in his memory for ministerial students at Mississippi College. Contributions may be sent to Mississippi College, Office of the President, P. O. Box 4001, Clinton, MS 39058.

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EAST HILL BAPTIST CHURCH in Pensacola, Florida is searching for a full-time Minister of Students and Recreation. Anyone interested in this position may send a resume to: East Hill Baptist Church, Minister of Students and Recreation Search Committee, 3960 Spanish Trail, Pensacola, FL 32504; Fax (850) 433-0097; or e-mail ehbc@bellsouth.net.

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CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS

Oh What A Love will be presented at Bentonia Church, Bentonia, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. by the combined choirs of Bentonia Church and Hillcrest Independent Methodist Church, Forest.

Celebrate the Season A Portrait of Christmas will be presented at Flowood

Church, Flowood, on Dec. 10 and 11 at 7 p.m., and Dec. 12 at 6 p.m.

The adult choir at Bayou View Church, Gulfport, will perform "Because of Bethlehem," Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. "A Star is Born" will be presented by the children's choir on Dec. 19 at 6 p.m.

Daniel's Hometown Christmas will be held on the front lawn of Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson, Dec. 10-12 from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, call the church at (601) 376-4112.

The Dawn of Redemption for the 1999 Singing Christmas Tree at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will be presented Dec. 10 at 7 p.m.; Dec. 11 at 7 p.m.; and Dec. 12 at 3 p.m. Call (601) 925-6434 for free tickets.

A Christmas to Remember will be presented by the combined choirs of Branch Church, Morton, on Dec. 19 at 5 p.m.

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Conventions hold annual meetings around country

GEORGIA

MACON, Ga. (BP) — Two congregations were removed from fellowship by nearly 2,000-vote margins during the Nov. 16 session of the Georgia Baptist Convention over the issue of homosexuality.

The votes on Oakhurst Church, Decatur, and Virginia-Highland Church, Atlanta, followed a constitutional amendment approved by messengers to the 1998 annual meeting that convention membership for "a cooperating church does not include (one) which knowingly takes, or has taken, any action to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior."

Both Oakhurst and Virginia-Highland churches have ordained openly homosexual people as deacons, according to media accounts. Oakhurst also has a homosexual associate pastor, while Virginia-Highland has allowed its facilities to be used for a marriage-like same-sex blessing.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia's (SBCV) executive board voted unanimously Nov. 15 to accept Liberty University's invitation to submit two names for election to the trustee board of the Lynchburg, Va., institution founded by Jerry Falwell in 1971.

The action essentially makes Liberty University a Southern Baptist institution, said Doyle Chauncey, executive director-treasurer of the Richmond-based Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia. The agreement, however, does not convey any financial support from the SBCV or the national Southern Baptist Convention, Chauncey said.

In a letter of congratulations to Falwell, Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson wrote: "For the great Liberty University to be a part of our Southern Baptist Zion and a part of one of the greatest church-planting movements in modern history through the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia is an answer to prayer for us all." Patterson also is president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

In other action the board approved the relocation of the SBCV's corporate headquarters just a few hundred feet from its current location in Glen Allen, Va. After Jan. 1, the SBCV's new address will be 4101 Cox Road, Suite 100, Glen Allen, Va., 23060.

ARIZONA

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (BP)—The 71st annual session of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention (ASBC) opened with word of the Baptist Foundation

of Arizona's filing of a Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition and concluded with an offering for those left destitute by the crisis. In between, the convention highlighted "Celebrate Jesus 2000: Caring for the Valley of the Sun" and conducted the normal business of a state convention in annual session.

Bill Agee, coordinator for "Celebrate Jesus 2000: Caring for the Valley of the Sun," said the North American Mission Board's

respond to any differences regarding persons selected."

The task force will also address how agencies can be empowered and yet be held accountable, and it will study convention communications — how the convention tells its story, Bass said.

He said he hopes the task force can be prepared to make recommendations at next year's annual meeting or at a special convention session

defeated, 133-244.

In presenting the budget, Scott Barber, chairman of the ASBC executive board's finance committee, explained that the budgeting process involves determining "priorities among priorities." For 2000, the committee chose to focus on leadership and families.

Twenty percent of the basic budget — the same percentage as in 1999 — and 18% of funds received in excess

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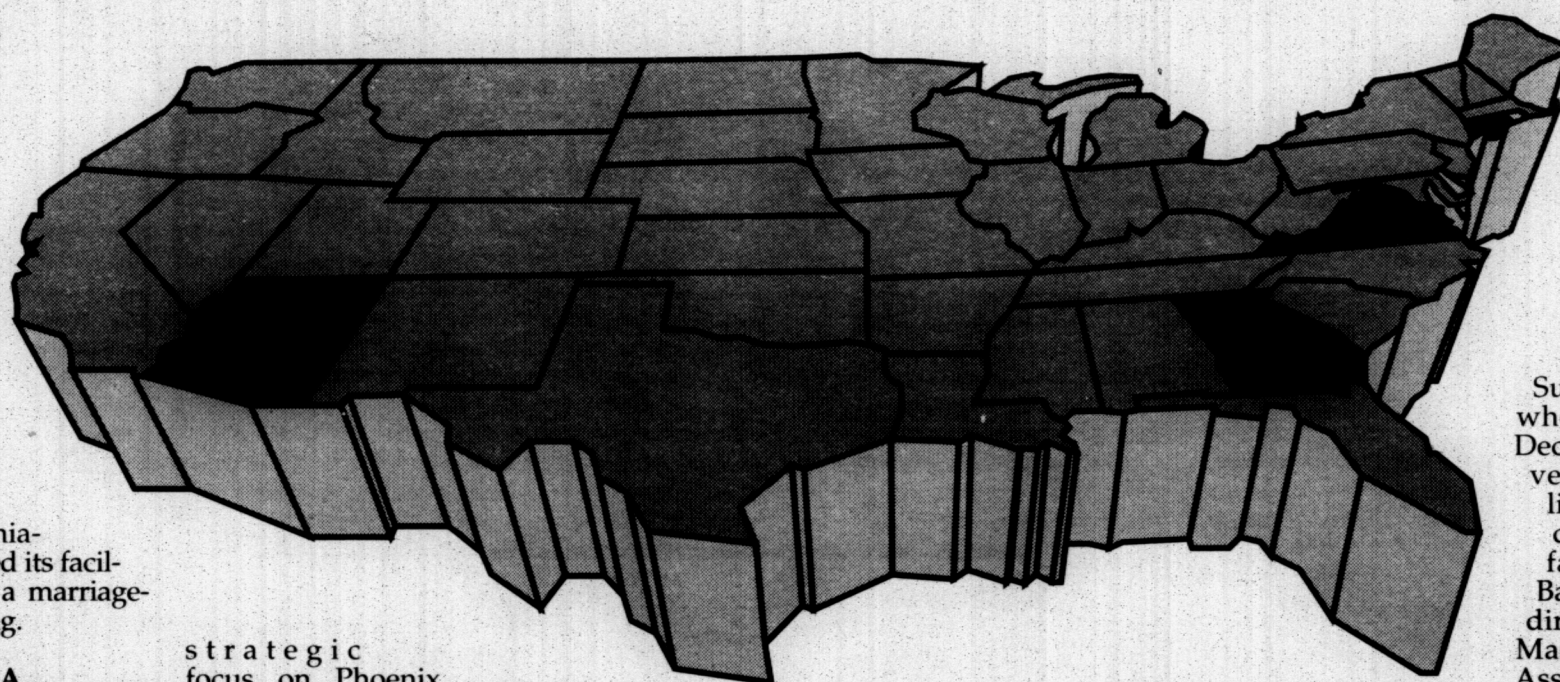
HARTFORD, Conn. (BP)—"New England ought to be known as a birthplace for pastors and churches" rather than as "a burial ground" for new ministry endeavors, challenged Randy Fearon. With those words, the Baptist Convention of New England's (BCNE) president set the tone for the 17th annual BCNE meeting, Nov. 11-12 at New Welcome Church, Hartford, Conn.

Fearon, pastor of Fellowship Church, Hanover, Mass., reflected on the difficulty inherent in being a pastor in New England. "There have been days," he said, "when my burial plot has had a down payment made on it."

During the annual meeting, messengers also:

- Honored Bob and Susan Brindle and Dick Risas who retire at the end of December. Brindle is the convention's missions/evangelism team leader who has devoted 33 years to various facets of New England Baptist work. Risas has been director of missions for the Massachusetts Baptist Association for 16 years.

Messengers adopted a \$2,764,747 budget for 2000, which includes, for the third year, a deficit, next year totaling \$96,782. The budget will continue to send 21% of Cooperative Program receipts to Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries. The budget includes one shared item, \$17,000 for church annuity plan.



strategic focus on Phoenix next year will require the involvement of everyone. Plans call for 17,000 volunteers, half of whom will be Arizonans and half of whom will come from out of state.

Steve Bass, ASBC executive director-treasurer, announced he has asked the state convention president to appoint a task force "to emerge a vision map strategy for our convention." The 10-12 member task force, whose membership will be approved by the ASBC executive board's administrative team and the state convention vice presidents, will have a two-fold task:

- to develop a convention-wide vision, with an accompanying mission statement and key priorities, and
- to propose any structural or constitutional changes needed to support the vision.

The task force will address the issue of how agency board members are elected. Currently, the Committee on Boards, which is appointed by the Committee on Committees, solicits recommendations for board members from Arizona Southern Baptists at large and from the agencies themselves.

The ASBC constitution provides that "if persons other than those suggested by the agency or commission are selected by the Committee on Boards, such decision, along with qualifications of person(s) selected to serve, will be communicated by the Committee on Boards to the agency or commission involved. The agency or commission may, in a spirit of cooperation, request a meeting with the Committee on Boards to

shortly thereafter.

Messengers adopted a Cooperative Program budget of \$3,181,130, a 5% increase over 1999. A motion by Bruce Coe, pastor of First Church, Chandler, to continue the 1999 budget and funding formula for 2000 in light of what he said is an anticipated decline in churches' receipts was

of the basic budget will be sent to Southern Baptist Convention ministries in North America and internationally. In recognition of the 75th anniversary of the Cooperative Program in 2000, the finance committee will consider next year a five-year plan to increase the SBC percentage 1% annually, bringing the total to 25%.



Ron M. Power, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

What should I do to help my 10-year-old son, who is still wetting the bed at night?

Do not make a big deal out of this! Bed wetting is something children will eventually outgrow; it just takes some children longer than others. How many 20-year-olds are still wetting the bed? Some practical suggestions: Limit liquid intake after supper. Make sure he goes to the bathroom before going to bed. When he wakes up in the morning, have him remove the sheets and wet pajamas and put them in the washer. Help him remake his bed in the evening, and explain this condition as natural and that he will get better as he gets older. The less upset over

this issue, the sooner it will subside. Understanding his concerns will assist him in overcoming this problem, one of many trials he will encounter in life.

My mother, who is not going to be living much longer, has begun giving away large sums of money and her jewelry. I am concerned there will not be anything for expenses at her death.

Has she prearranged for her funeral? Find out before you get too upset about her spending habits. Secondly, have arrangements been made for her care? If this has not been decided, discuss the options and costs with your mother.

There is a saying, "Once a man, twice a child." When it comes to aging parents, you will eventually become the parent as she becomes more child-like. You may have to let your mother know of your concerns and help budget her money — even the amount she wants to give away. Ask questions and be prepared for whatever answer she may give. If she won't listen to you, possibly she will listen a close friend (or preferably a banker or CPA she trusts). Frankly, you are too emotionally close to the situation to be objective. Spend time with her, ask her how you can pray for her, try to understand her fears and concerns, and include her in your life as much as possible.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Time of testing

Matthew 4:1-14

By Lynn Jones

The most dreaded words in the classroom are, "Take out a sheet of paper and clear your desk." Those words are the unmistakable sign of a "pop test." The Christian life also has its unannounced tests. They come in various forms and at different times. Temptation is such a test. Sometimes it comes after high moments with God. In Jesus' case, it came after his baptism. Or, as someone has said, "After the dove came the devil."

No one was with Jesus at the time of this testing. He must have shared this account with his disciples in order to help them as they faced temptation in their

own lives. It can help us as well.

Physical or spiritual? (vv. 1-4). In the first temptation, the devil approached Jesus at the end of his forty-day fast and tempted him to turn stones into bread. This was the temptation to use his power in a selfish way. Jesus did many miracles to help other people, but he refused to do any miracle to make life more comfortable for himself.

Instead of turning the stones into bread, Jesus said that persons do not live by physical bread alone but by spiritual food which is the word of God. This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3. Jesus responded to all three tempta-



Jones

for us. It is not like cake — saved for some special occasion. It is to be our daily bread.

Presumptuous or submissive? (vv. 5-7). In the second temptation, the devil tempted Jesus to do the spectacular. He told Jesus to jump from the highest point of the temple. Then the devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12 to persuade Jesus that God would not allow Jesus to hurt himself.

Just because persons may quote scripture, does not mean that they are from God. God's holy Word can be used in

unholy ways. Persons with unworthy motives can use the "Sword of the Spirit" as a dagger that can inflict great injury.

Jesus refused to follow Satan's advice. He said that we are not to presume upon our relationship to God as being a license to live life recklessly. Always wanting to put God to the test is not a sign of faith but of lack of faith.

Power or sacrifice? (vv. 8-10). In the third temptation, Satan carried Jesus to a high mountain from which they could view the kingdoms of the world. He said that if Jesus would worship him he would give Jesus these kingdoms. While the kingdoms ultimately belong to God, it is true that many of them give allegiance to Satan who is called the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4).

Jesus rejected this temptation. He said that we cannot divide our loyalty. We must worship and serve God alone.

Notice that true worship leads to service.

Panic or service? (vv. 11-14). In spite of Satan's temptation and the danger that Jesus faced as seen in the imprisonment of John the Baptist, he began his public ministry in Capernaum. Fear and insecurity may lead to panic. Faith leads to faithful service.

A father gave this advice to his teenage son. "Son, don't ever let Satan into the car with you because before you know it, he'll want to drive." Jesus never gave Satan any space in his life. This initial victory established the pattern that persisted throughout his life.

Jesus won every encounter that he had with Satan, including his ultimate triumph in the resurrection (Col. 2:15). Because of Christ's indwelling presence in our lives, we too can win the victory over Satan in the time of testing.

Jones is pastor of First Church, Booneville.

LIFE AND WORK

Playing supporting roles in the drama of redemption

Luke 1:26-56; 2:33-40

By Michael Jones

The word "servant" is one that is used frequently in Christian contexts. It is one which should be used synonymously with being a Christian. Yet, do we as Christians fully understand what it means to be a genuine servant of Christ? We say we are "servants" for Christ, but how many of us can fully grasp what being a servant involves?

Mercer Dictionary of the Bible describes the idea found in the New Testament of servant as this: "One who is devoted to God, bound by covenant to fulfill the demands of the

gospel, and therefore quite properly designated a slave of Christ." Devoted, bound, and slave, these are all words which describe a servant. Do they just come naturally when we accept Christ into our hearts? How can we become a servant in Christ?

In Luke chapters one and two, we read about the servant Mary. Through her role as servant, we can see what God desires for one to become a servant.

Submitting humbly (1:30-35, 38). The angel appeared to Mary and informed her of the servant role God desired of her. It was a specific calling, to be the mother of God's Son.



Jones

She submitted humbly to this calling.

For us to be servants of God, the first requirement is to be willing to submit humbly and to be available to his calling wherever he might lead, from the mission field in some distant country to staying at home and quietly serving in our own town. The key is to be willing and available.

As Christians we must also realize that we are all called to serve Christ in some way. For instance, all Christians are called to tell others about Christ. However, some are called to a specific task. It might be to be a missionary, a Sunday school teacher, or simply be a bright light in a dark work place. The important thing for us is to make sure we are available and willing to submit humbly to God's service, whatever it might entail.

Believing God (1:42-45). In this passage, Elizabeth was

used by God to bless Mary and to affirm her belief in God's words. Elizabeth blessed Mary and her baby as she entered the house and later blessed her for her believing God would accomplish what he said he would do in her.

Believing God is the next necessary step in being a servant for Christ. Mary believed the angel, regardless of how unnatural it may have seemed. We must also believe God in his calling of our lives to be servants. Our service might be something which we feel we could never do. Or, it might be a service which takes us out of our comfort zone and challenges everything we have.

Believing on God's Word, that he will provide and accomplish what he has said, is what gives us the power to accomplish whatever service God desires. We must remember God is a faithful God and provides for his servants.

Enduring pain (2:33-35,39).

Here, Simeon reveals to Mary and Joseph the destiny of Jesus' life. People would rise and fall according to their response to him. Also, some would speak against him. Finally, Simeon revealed that Mary would pain to her "soul" because of him. Mary had submitted humbly, believed God, and now found that as a result she was going to have to endure pain for being a servant.

This is a valuable insight all servants must realize, that pain is often a part of service. In following God's call to serve, at some point there may come a time of pain and suffering. It is here we must endure the pain and continue to follow God's leading.

Mercer used the words devoted, bound, and slave to describe a servant. Maybe better words would be submit, believe, and endure. Do these words describe you?

Jones is associate pastor/youth minister at Monticello Church, Monticello.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Live in love

1 John 2:3-11, 15-17

By Carl M. White

John advises first century believers, and us, to love God, to love others, and to reject the love of the world.

The test of obedience (vv. 3-6). You have heard the old saying, "the proof is in the pudding." That is what John is saying in this passage. Obedience is the validation of faith. If there were a trial and you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to condemn you? John says that obedience to the commands of God is evidence of a relationship with God.

Consider the following example. A newly assigned officer was told there was an

impostor among the 100 men in uniform before him. How can he determine which is the charlatan? All he has to do is call them to attention and then bark out the orders of a military drill. The one who cannot follow the orders is the impostor.

John goes on to say that keeping the Word of God in your life has a specific result. The love of God is perfected in such a person.

This word translated in the NASB as perfection also has the meaning of matured. In other words, the process of hearing and obeying Christ has the result of maturing his love in your life. The Gospel song says,



White

"The longer I serve him, the sweeter it grows," but also, the longer you serve him, the more his love grows in you.

The command to love (vv. 7-8). John points out that love is a command. It is most likely that John is referring to what Jesus said as recorded in John 13:34, where he says, "love one another, even as I have loved you."

The command to love is not new. In the Old Testament, God told the children of Israel they were to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and might (Deut. 6:5).

What is new is the command to carry that love forward to include all others, as Christ has done.

Recently, a group of religious officials in the city of Chicago asked Southern Baptists not to come to their city spreading the Gospel. Their reason? It might

stir up hate crime. This illustrates the world's view of God's love. How can it be that a group of people motivated and mobilized by the love of God will stir up hate?

The test of loving others (vv. 9-11). Medical science has various tests for discovering the presence of certain diseases. Blood tests can reveal diabetes, high blood pressure, and infections. Urine tests can discover kidney diseases and certain stomach disorders. Wouldn't it be interesting if there were a physical test for the love of God in a person's life?

John says there is. The test is how a person treats others. The person who truly knows the love of God in their heart will not hate, but will instead try to find a way to tell the lost about Christ. I'm not talking about beating them over the head with a Bible, or sticking a FAITH tract in their face, but rather, getting to know them,

and caring for them enough until you find out where their hurt is. Then, as the Lord gives opportunity, sharing the Good News of Christ in an intelligent, meaningful way.

The forbidden love (vv. 15-17). There are limits, even on love. We are commanded to love the Lord our God, and to love others as Christ has loved them. Yet, there is one thing we are commanded NOT to love. That is "the world."

The world can be summed up as three things, John concludes. The lust of the flesh, or physical pleasures; the lust of the eye, or material pleasure; and the pride of life, or the arrogance that says one doesn't need God.

Either of these three are shown by John to be in direct opposition to the love of the father. A Christian who pursues loving others as Christ has, will avoid the love of the world.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

Patterson: So. Baptists going to Chicago

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) —Southern Baptists will move forward with plans for an evangelistic and church-planting initiative in Chicago next year, Paige Patterson responded to the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago in a Nov. 29 letter.

Patterson, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), wrote to the Chicago religious leaders, "Friends, we will see you in Chicago armed with peace on earth and good will for all men and hearts full of love for you and all the noble people of Chicago."

The council, whose members include leaders from the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago and 39 other Protestant, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish institutions, sent a letter to Patterson on Nov. 27 asserting that "hate crimes" might result from a "Strategic Focus Cities" initiative in Chicago next year by the SBC's North American Mission Board (NAMB), the Chicago Metro Baptist Association and Southern Baptist volunteers from across the country.

At the outset of the letter, the Chicago council says it "urgently requests that the Southern Baptist Convention modify plans for sending 100,000 volunteers to seek converts in Chicago during the coming year." At the letter's conclusion, the council asks Baptists "to enter into discussion with us and reconsider your plans regarding this matter."

Among the points made by Patterson in his letter of response:

- "During the lifetime of Jesus and throughout the history of the early church,

religious leaders often opposed the witness of Jesus and His followers, but the common people heard them gladly. The people of Chicago will with characteristic friendship and hospitality do precisely the same."

- "When Southern Baptists come to Chicago, we will come as men and women of peace, committed as always to absolute religious liberty for every individual. We will oppose all human violence as unworthy of the Prince of Peace. We will raise the standard of freedom from all religious coercion and intimidation of any kind. We will, indeed, attempt to provide for those in physical need, but we will also point people to the crucified and risen Lord Jesus who said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father except through me' (John 14:6)."

- "If there is violence or 'hate crimes,' such will not be perpetrated by Southern Baptists or in any way engendered by our compassionate message. To the contrary, we are much more likely to be the targets of such attacks."

"Furthermore," Patterson added in his response to the Chicago religious leaders, "letters like the one that you wrote to the press, under the guise of writing to me, are more likely the stuff from which hate crimes emerge."

(The Chicago council's letter was released to the news media the day it was dated, while the copy to Patterson apparently was simply placed in the mail. As of Nov. 29, Patterson's office at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., where he serves as president, had not received the letter, leaving him to respond to the letter

only as reported in the news media.)

- "In light of 'letters' communicated through the press, it is tempting to suspect that it is not so much violence that you fear as it is the positive response of precious souls to the invitation of Christ to salvation and forgiveness," Patterson suggested in his letter.

"You appear to desire religious liberty for Bible-believing evangelicals as long as they agree not to exercise that freedom," Patterson continued. "It is but one small step from alleging that the bearing of witness for Jesus results in 'hate crimes' to the allegation that such witness is a 'hate crime.' When the sad day arrives when that last small step is introduced, America will have forfeited that sacred conviction of liberty of conscience that motivated the founders of this nation!"

Meanwhile, the North American Mission Board released a statement Nov. 29 also addressing the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago's letter.

"Some Chicago religious leaders apparently misunderstand the design and intent of Southern Baptists' city outreach programs," the agency's statement noted.

Jim Queen, executive director of the 200-church Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association, was quoted in the NAMB statement as saying, "We are sharing Jesus' message, not a Southern Baptist message. Our desire is to demonstrate that Christians love and care for the city and people of Chicago."

"In a pluralist society where religious freedom is valued, I don't think anyone who understands our efforts would criticize our desire to talk about the hope we have found in Jesus Christ," Queen said. "Our message is one of love, not hate, and we join people of faith and good will in Chicago in condemning all violence targeted at any faith group."



Patterson



Chicago

African-American students study opportunities

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Clarence Landry recently decided to plant churches in African American communities in the United States, and the need for students just like him is overwhelming: In Louisiana alone, none of the 38 requests for church plants in African American communities have been filled.

The need is greater still on the international mission field. Of 4,850 Southern Baptist missionaries in the field, only 22 are African American, said David Cornelius, an International Mission Board (IMB) staff member who works to encourage African Americans to consider careers in international missions.

"There is a cry from the field to have more African Americans on the mission field," Cornelius said. "I'm often asked, 'Why don't we see black missionaries?' When I went to Nigeria [as a missionary], it took some time to convince them that I was a black missionary from America. They'd never seen a black missionary."

Cornelius and five other leaders from Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agencies visited New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) Nov. 9 as part of a

vocational ministry conference to inform both African American and international students about the ministry opportunities through the SBC. African American leaders from IMB, the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), LifeWay Christian Resources, WMU, and the Louisiana Baptist Convention were on hand to encourage almost 100 of these students in their ministry.

"We have a lot of students come through our seminary for a theological education who don't know what ministry opportunities are out there," said Ken Weathersby, director of the Cecil B. Day Center (Nehemiah Project) for Church Planting and the first African American professor to join the NOBTS faculty. "They didn't know we had these people in the SBC. It's important for these students to see national leaders of their descent to encourage them."

Robert Wilson of the North American Mission Board addressed students on the history of African American involvement within the SBC, as well as the SBC's structure after its reorganization in 1997. Wilson also reported that since

the SBC "became intentional" about planting black churches in 1989, it has planted more than 1,700. These churches, which have a 20-to-1 baptismal ratio, are among the fastest-growing in the convention.

"You can be very instrumental in helping the SBC be what it needs to be and do what it needs to do," Wilson said.

Tuesday night's program included presentations by Leroy Fountain of the Annuity Board, who addressed students about financial security in their ministry; Jay Wells of LifeWay Christian Resources, who spoke on the benefits of the small-group experience and the LifeWay resources available to ministers; Ken Ellis of NAMB, who urged students to join the chaplaincy; Deborah Berry of WMU, who informed students about the Sisters Who Care program and other programs offered by the WMU; representatives Larry Black and James Jenkins from the Louisiana Baptist Convention, who informed students of present needs in the state; and Weathersby, who reviewed church-planting opportunities through the Nehemiah Project.

Clarence Landry, NOBTS student and pastor of His

Sanctuary Ministries Southern Baptist Mission, said the conference enlightened him to ministry opportunities about which he never would have known otherwise. After the conference, he said he would be directing his studies toward the master of divinity degree in church planting.

"I didn't even know the SBC had African American leaders at the national level," Landry said. "That was very encouraging to me."

"The need for planting churches is unbelievable, and the SBC has the vehicle to do it. They have the support, retirement — all the things that would make it attractive. With the SBC you could really reach the world."

Weathersby said the conference will not be an isolated event, voicing hope for another like it next year. He said the conference springs not only from a passion for students of all color, but from his passion to see churches planted in North America.

"There is a need for church planters nationally from all ethnic groups," Weathersby said. "We just want to hook up those across the country who know with those who may not know."

Bibliocipher

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PKV ZA OZPO NAPLAOZ
NAIAGAOZ FPEAQ, PKV
EPOZANAOZ TNHYO
HKOM SYTA AOANKPS:
OZPO RMOZ ZA OZPO
QMFAOZ PKV ZA OZPO
NAPLAOZ UPC NAXMYIA
OMEAOZAN.

XMZK TMHN:

OZYNOC-QYD

Clue: N = R

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Four: Twenty.